INTERVIEW OF JOHANN RUSH

Report typed 11/25/68
Paul L. Hoch

SYNOPSIS:

On 11/24/68, I interviewed Johann Rush, formerly a news photographer for WDSU in New Orleans, concerning film he took of Lee Harvey Oswald's distribution of FPCC literature on 8/16/63, and related matters. Some of the film shot on 8/16/63 was routinely discarded that day, but it is believed that all of the rest was given to the FBI and the SS and is currently available. The stills Rush gave the SS were taken from this film, but we do not know exactly which frames were involved. Rush was never asked by the Federal authorities for an identification of people in his pictures, but he has no new information to provide on the unidentified persons. He spoke with Oswald after the court appearance on 8/12/63 and suggested that Oswald phone WDSU if he gave out literature again.

DETAILS:

Disposition of the film after it was taken: Rush advised that since the 8/16 literature distribution was a routine story, he probably shot about 50 feet (about 80 seconds) of film. A couple of hours later, perhaps after completing other assignments, he took the film to Pan American Films, as usual, for processing. They sent the processed film to WDSU. It was edited to about 30 to 40 seconds for the 5:30 p.m. news show. This editing was not done by Rush, but probably by Edwin Pouchet (phonetic). Rush does not recall what was on the film that was edited out and discarded. The remaining film was shown on the evening show and probably also on the 11 p.m. news, and then filed. Such film is kept for 3 months and thus would ordinarily have been discarded at the end of November.

After the assassination: On 11/22/63, when Oswald was named in connection with the assassination, various WDSU personnel, including Rush, recalled that they had some film of Oswald. It was located and run locally and provided to the network that night. Rush is satisfied that no further editing was done at this point.

On 11/23 or 11/24, Rush received permission from his boss, John Corporan, to take the original film to Pan American Films to get copies made. Rush believes, but is not certain, that this is when the literature distribution film was combined with the shots of Oswald leaving the courtroom on 8/12 and of the interview at WDSU on 8/21. He is confident that no cuts were made at this point. He had 3 positive and 3 negative prints of the entire film made, and still has one of each. He advised that they are unspliced and that one can see where the original was spliced. This film, then, containing all the film of the 8/16 incident that existed at the time of the assassination, is the one that was made available to the network and the various Federal agencies, and is available now. (The SS referred to what they got as a film "clip" (CE 1153), but it was the entire available film.)

Stills: Mr. Rush may have been requested by the FBI or the SS to make stills, but he would have done so on his own initiative anyhow, for possible use by the wire services. He did not recall how many stills he made, or from how many frames. He believed that he made stills only from the 8/16 sequence, except perhaps for one closeup of Oswald. At this point I showed Rush excerpts from CE 1153. He did not recall anything which contradicted this SS report, which says that Rush gave the SS one still on 11/24, and the film plus 17 stills from 3 different scenes on 11/26. He does not recall whether these 17 stills were from 17 different frames. He said he would have made stills from two different frames of the same scene, such as Pizzo Exh. 453 A and B, to show the persons pictured from different angles. He has no copies of the stills in his possession.